

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 22 April 2010

Waterfowl and waterbirds continue to trickle through Fort Drum, even as some local breeders are incubating eggs. Canada Geese have been observed sitting on eggs since the first week of April, and by 20 April it had become routine to see groups of male Mallards scattered on installation ponds with no females in sight, a sure sign that the females are sitting on eggs. Common Loons appeared on Indian Lake during the first week of April.

Perhaps the highlight of the spring so far was three Horned Grebes in breeding plumage on the settling pond for a vehicle wash facility on 15 April; although long expected, this is the first time Horned Grebes have been documented on Fort Drum.



Horned Grebe with young (Photo: USFWS).

Osprey have been seen on Fort Drum regularly since 8 April; most of these birds are probably migrants, but at least one nesting pair is now present in TA 19. The first Broad-winged Hawk of the year was heard calling over TA 9A on 15 April; Red-shouldered Hawks were also in the area. American Kestrels, present in small numbers during the first week of April, can now be found in open areas throughout Fort Drum. An apparent pair of Merlins was seen regularly near the Fort Drum Recreation Permit office 20-22 April and is behaving as if they may nest in the area. If nesting is confirmed, this will be the first documented nesting for Fort Drum, although breeding has been suspected for several years.

On 6 April several species were seen for the first time in TAs 4 and 5, including Hermit Thrush, Pine Warbler, and Field and Vesper Sparrows. Nobody had been out on Fort Drum looking for birds during the previous four days, so it's not clear when these species first arrived on Fort Drum. Assuming 6 April was their arrival data (although they probably showed up earlier), then these species showed up 12 days earlier than the long-term average arrival dates reported for northern New York (although some of these published dates are likely based on very small sample sizes). Eastern Towhees were already present on 2 April, which is 15 days before their average arrival date, and species continued to show up earlier than usual into mid-April, including Virginia Rail by 8 April (average arrival is the 27th), Blue-headed Vireo by the 15th (average is the 29th) and Brown Thrasher by 19 April (average is the 25th). The record early arrival date to northern New York for all species combined was set in 2009, and so far it appears that migration is well ahead of the pace needed to break that record in 2010.

On 15 April, moose scat was found on Alexandria Rd. in TA 8. Although young bull moose are occasionally seen in the fall, a spring sighting would be a first.

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Birds seen on Fort Drum 03 April – 22 April:

Canada Goose	Eastern Phoebe
Wood Duck	Northern Shrike
Mallard	Blue-headed Vireo
Green-winged Teal	Blue Jay
Ring-necked Duck	American Crow
Lesser Scaup	Common Raven
Bufflehead	Tree Swallow
Common Goldeneye	Black-capped Chickadee
Hooded Merganser	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Ruffed Grouse	White-breasted Nuthatch
Wild Turkey	Brown Creeper
Common Loon	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Pied-billed Grebe	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Horned Grebe	Eastern Bluebird
Great Blue Heron	Hermit Thrush
American Bittern	American Robin
Turkey Vulture	Brown Thrasher
Osprey	European Starling
Northern Harrier	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Red-shouldered Hawk	Pine Warbler
Broad-winged Hawk	Eastern Towhee
Red-tailed Hawk	Chipping Sparrow
American Kestrel	Field Sparrow
Merlin	Vesper Sparrow
Virginia Rail	Savannah Sparrow
Killdeer	Fox Sparrow
Wilson's Snipe	Song Sparrow
American Woodcock	Swamp Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Dark-eyed Junco
Rock Pigeon	Red-winged Blackbird
Mourning Dove	Rusty Blackbird
Great Horned Owl	Common Grackle
Barred Owl	Brown-headed Cowbird
Belted Kingfisher	Purple Finch
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	American Goldfinch
Downy Woodpecker	House Sparrow
Hairy Woodpecker	
Northern Flicker	
Pileated Woodpecker	